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# THE SCHOOL REVIEW

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## NOTES FROM A HIGH-SCHOOL REGISTRAR ATTENDANCE RECORDS

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H. T. CLIFTON  
Registrar, Pasadena (Cal.) High School

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In the modern city high school, there is the same need of a planning department as in the modern commercial institution. For the routing of "material" through the "works," the office of the high-school registrar, whether this official be given such title or not, must gain increasing recognition. The application of modern business methods to the routine and detail of high-school administration can but result in more efficient work throughout the institution.

As an example of the results of study given the problem of high-school attendance records, I shall describe the forms worked out by me for the school with which I am connected. Wherever meeting our needs, ideas have been borrowed from forms in use elsewhere, though it is believed that the results reached may offer, in their turn, suggestion to others.

To make clear something of our local conditions, I will say that our school is located in a city of about 35,000 and has had a total registration of 1,600 pupils during the year now closing. The average daily attendance is about 1,325. On account of the inclusion of a rather large transient or tourist population in the figures given and of the modern lack of proper ideals of application among the student body as a whole, attendance totals are considerably

influenced. The school is growing at the rate of approximately two hundred per year, and in the evolution from a small high school to one of metropolitan proportions, the need for closer count of attendance was made evident. The classroom system did not seem to be handling the situation adequately, and centralization of clerical and administrative work was determined upon. Under the new plan all clerical work including register-keeping, reports of attendance, answering of questionnaires, etc., is handled in the Registrar's office and from there all follow-up is made.

In outlining the details of routine necessary to meet the local conditions, both with regard to the pupil and with regard to the clerical help to be allowed us in the office, it was soon found that the report for the day of pupils absent from the recitations, as formerly made by each recitation teacher at the close of the day, would not meet our needs. In the bringing of the individual pupil's reports together, this method entailed more clerical work than we could provide for, and in the delay resulting before these individual reports were available disciplinary measures were rendered less effective. The following plan then is the result of a year's study of the situation and of two years' trial of the methods determined upon.

At the beginning of each recitation period, the recitation teacher takes the roll of the class, noting in the classbook any absentees and filling out for each individual absent one of the coupons shown in Fig. 1. These coupons are printed in strips of five on a heavy paper, a light paper being less easily handled in filing. The strips are padded and, where a school has its own printing plant as ours does, may have the teacher's name printed. This saves time in writing the slip or renders unnecessary the use of a rubber stamp. If no pupil is absent, a dated slip for the period, with line drawn in the name space, is sent in. In this way each teacher is accounted for, and fewer failures to report will result. For tardiness, the number of minutes is entered and must be made up by the pupil staying the actual time or an extended time at the end of the school day. Where the necessity of correcting a report occurs, a correction slip is made out, if the original has been collected. The coupons are placed in a small "bull-dog"

clip screwed to the frame of the entrance door and located where it may be reached by the collector with the least amount of disturbance of the class. The clip may be used for notices to the teacher or in general for all written material in-coming to the teacher or out-going to the office. After completing the absence report, the teacher checks the absence cards of those out the previous day, signs them, and notes their receipt by a proper mark in the class-book record. If these details are carefully and promptly handled with each class, the teacher will find a salutary effect upon the

<b>LAST NAME</b>	<b>FIRST NAME</b>	<b>MIDDLE NAME</b>
<b>PERIOD</b>	<b>TARDY</b> _____ <b>MIN.</b>	
<b>DATE</b>		
<b>J. M. ROBERTSON, Teacher.</b>		

FIG. 1.—Coupon of Absence Report Slip

class and little, if any, time taken from the recitation period itself, unless the class is a very large one.

In the office of each department head we have assigned a pupil, usually from the commercial department, for office duty during each period of the school day. This pupil makes the round of the rooms of that department and collects the absence report slips and such other material for transmission to the office as the clip may contain. The collector receives from the Registrar's office at the beginning of the period, the department envelope showing where collections are to be made during that period and containing notices to teachers, etc., and after sorting the collected slips alphabetically, they are placed in the envelope and this is returned to the Registrar's office. If a telephone is available in each room reports may be made by its use, though it would seem to me that the written slip should still be used as a check upon the verbal

report. As soon as the slips for the first period arrive in the office, the final alphabetical arrangement of the slips for the school as a whole may begin. If this is carefully done and later periods compared with the preceding, cases needing investigation may be noted at once and attention to them be given. This will bring immediate action in cases where the pupil has left the grounds during the school day without permission from the proper administrative officer or is otherwise absenting himself without sufficient reason.

From the absence slips thus turned in, the absence card is made out for each pupil reported and must be obtained by him from the office before reporting again in any of the exercises missed (Fig. 2).

No.		DATE ABSENT		No.		PUPILS MUST HAVE THIS CARD SIGNED BY TEACHER BEFORE RE-ENTERING AND RETURN TO OFFICE OF ISSUE WHEN FULLY SIGNED.		1																																								
PERIOD <table border="1" style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <tr><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>3</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>4</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>5</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	2							3							4							5							NAME  Absent FROM PERIOD 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 To 1 2 3 4 5 6 7		Re-enters DETAINED Excuse AT		Tardy PERIOD 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 DATE FROM 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 TO 1 2 3 4 5 6 7		DATE ISSUED Sick " In Family Out of Town Urgent Necessity No Reason		BY _____		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	
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FIG. 2.—Absence Card for readmission to class (5×3 inches)

The card is ordinarily obtained before school in the morning and is given to the pupil upon presentation of a statement from the parent or guardian. This statement should show the date and period of and the reason for the absence, these items being checked with the teacher's reports as shown on the card. When the card is issued to the pupil the stub is retained in the office and is used as the record from which the transcript is made to the register card (Fig. 3). It will be noted that the stub has provision for the entry of all periods of a seven-period (as provision is made in printing the card) day for five consecutive days of absence. If the card is not called for on the second day, the reports for that day

are added to the same card and stub, and so on until the pupil returns or a report of "withdrawal" is received. After five days' consecutive absence the teacher need no longer report, as the

No.		PROGRAM																COUNT								GRADE	
Name																											
Age		Tel.																									
No.	M.	T.	W.	Th.	F.	M.	T.	W.	Th.	F.	M.	T.	W.	Th.	F.	M.	T.	W.	Th.	F.	M.	T.	W.	Th.	F.	PRESENT	DEC.
1																											
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7																											
8																											
9																											
10																											

FATHER \_\_\_\_\_ ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
 MOTHER \_\_\_\_\_  
 9-14 GUARDIAN \_\_\_\_\_

FIG. 3.—Register Card (6×4 inches ruled in colors)

pupil is marked "left." Where able to reach the home by telephone, prompt reports are usually possible. If the card is not called for on the second day and further absence slips do not appear,

THIS PUPIL WAS NOT REQUIRED  
 TO OBTAIN CARD FOR ABSENCE  
 REPORTED BY YOU. PLEASE STATE  
 WHETHER RECORD IS CORRECT.

FIG. 4.—Follow-up for Absence Card uncalled for

then the teacher has not required the card for re-entrance to class and this failure may be looked into by a rubber stamp follow-up shown in Fig. 4, for of necessity this requirement must be enforced.

If no report has been sent in by the teacher, though the pupil is absent from the class, this will appear on the stub, as there will be no check in the square for that period. The attention of the teacher may be called to this oversight by a typewritten or rubber stamp follow-up shown in Fig. 5, for again such failure conduces to laxness in the handling of the absence problem.

To the objection that the cards cannot be handled rapidly enough at one place to prevent delay at the opening of school, I would say that we rarely need more than two at the counter to handle these cards. There is of course a tendency to crowd in within the last five minutes, but tardiness for this cause may be

***THE ABSENCE OF***

---

***FOR PERIOD\_\_\_\_\_***

***ON\_\_\_\_\_***

***WAS NOT REPORTED.***

---

***THE OFFICE RECORD IS CHECKED WITH  
PUPIL'S STATEMENT FROM HOME.  
WHAT IS YOUR RECORD ?***

FIG. 5.—Follow-up on failure to report absence

handled as any other, and will decrease promptly if proper measures are used. On extraordinary occasions, an absence of one-half of our enrolment can be promptly handled by sufficient subdivision of the cards alphabetically arranged and by supplementing the office force with one or two teachers having a free period called in to handle a subdivision.

The absence card should be signed by each teacher of the classes missed and returned to the office of issue. This gives a check upon the pupil's return to the exercises for which he is enrolled, a matter of some importance where a pupil is counted as "left" after five days' consecutive absence, and so is no longer reported by the teacher. Where the school is large the detail of checking the return of the card may be so great, that it may be more simple to

notify each teacher concerned of such re-entering pupil, using a regular printed slip provided for notices of entrance or withdrawal. If this is found to lessen the efficiency of the card, however, its return may be insisted upon, in which case consecutive numbers given the cards as issued will assist greatly in balancing them with the stubs.

The statement presented by the pupil may require checking for authenticity of signature. Where one clerk is regularly handling these statements, this necessity will readily be brought to the attention of such clerk.

Schools which do not have free interchange between periods may not need such detailed check as is indicated in the use of this absence card, but this close check has been forced upon us by the local conditions.

Where the state requires a definite form of register, that form would necessarily be used. We obtained permission to use the card shown in Fig. 3, this card following as closely as possible the form of the state register. The report is made on the basis of quarter-day attendance; if any part of one quarter is lost, in general the whole quarter counts as lost. Absence is shown by a suitable mark placed in the proper one of the four divisions of the square for the day. A whole day's absence may be shown as in the figure, tardiness by the number of minutes missed or the number present, as may be decided upon. The card allows space for the pupil's program in case this is necessary to determine the "count"—the valuation of the pupil, if part-time—or for other reason.

A card record can be handled much more easily than a book record, unless in the single item of taking totals for the month. By the use of simple forms ruled as needed, and with an adding machine available, the matter of totals is simplified. The grade is indicated on the card by the year number and whether boy or girl by the letter B or G, thus B 9 or G 12. If small metal markers showing the year are used, with the boys' cards in one file drawer and the girls' in another, each year marker may be kept in its own separate row from front to back, and the totaling by grades is further simplified.

Where no special requirements of register are made, it would seem that the stubs filed alphabetically would give sufficient record for each pupil.



Where a pupil is detained in the office for administrative reasons beyond the time for beginning his class, this may be explained to the teacher by the use of the slip shown in Fig. 6.

If the necessity arises for a pupil to take a study period for special work with a recitation teacher, the request for the excuse may come on the form shown in Fig. 7. The study teacher then retains stub numbered 1 and the pupil returns to the study teacher the next day stub numbered 2 with the O.K. of the teacher to whom he reported.

No.....	<b>PASADENA HIGH SCHOOL</b>	No.....
	<b>PASADENA, CALIF.</b>	
To	<b>OFFICE EXCUSE</b>	
	<b>TEACHER WILL TAKE UP AND RETURN TO OFFICE</b>	
.....	.....	
Period.....	.....	
Reason .....	Detained in the office .....period	
Time .....	Reason .....	
Date.....	Time.....	
O.K.....	Date.....	
	.....	
	<b>14-13</b>	

FIG. 6.—Office Excuse

For transfer to the library, where, on account of the large number going at certain times of the day, the previous method of transfer is not wholly satisfactory, the form shown in Fig. 8 may be issued to the pupil by the teacher of the preceding period.

The slip is collected at the entrance to the library and is sent promptly to the study-room teacher with whom the pupil is due. This prevents an absence report being turned in for him.

In the case of a class excursion arranged for pupils from the school, which will take time from other classes, the date of the excursion is posted a week ahead. A list of the pupils to go is

furnished the Registrar's office and a card similar to Fig. 2, but of another and easily distinguishable color, is placed in the hands of each of these pupils before the first period exercise of the day preceding the excursion. This card is signed by the teachers of the classes to be missed and during the excursion is collected by the

Period Teacher   Please Excuse	PASADENA HIGH SCHOOL	1	No.....
	Pupil's Name.....		
	Time.....Date.....		
	Transferred		
	a. to	Library	
		Study	
		Detention Class	Room
		Room	
	b. on account	Change of Program	
		check item applying	
			Teacher
	PASADENA HIGH SCHOOL	2	No.....
	Pupil's Name.....		
	Time Entered.....Time Left.....Date.....		
	Transferred		
	a. to	Library	
		Study	
		Detention Class	Room
		Room	
	b. on account	Change of Program	
		check item applying	
	10-14		Teacher

FIG. 7.—Transfer Slip. Transfer from study other than to Library

teacher in charge. The cards collected are then filed in the Registrar's office by this teacher and any failure of a pupil to report as arranged can be investigated.

These four suggestions will indicate some of the provisions necessary to prevent unnecessary absence reports through keeping the recitation or study teacher informed of cases of legitimate excuse.

In conclusion, emphasis should be placed upon the following, as advantages found in the use of the system outlined above.

A prompt report is obtained, allowing prompt follow-up of delinquents.

A minimum of time is taken from the teacher and from the class.

The teacher is relieved of the drudgery of the register and its bookkeeping.

The teacher is relieved of all follow-up except that of the actual work of the class missed by the pupil.

The emphasis being thus placed upon the classwork, avoidable absences should be decreased.

_____	
Has reported in the Library Room 300 C	
.....Period	From Study Room.....
Date .....	Slip from.....
	Teacher
Reason for transfer to library	

FIG. 8.—Library Transfer Slip

Standardization can be reached in matters of routine, so that each pupil is treated as on the same basis and each one knows what requirements are to be met.

If a system of this sort is closely correlated with the other details of the Registrar's office toward reaching standard and efficient methods and if it is supplemented by statistical studies to show the effects of educational losses upon the efficiency of the school as a whole, it will add much toward the smooth operation of the necessary machinery. Whatever system is used must be flexible enough to change with the needs of the pupil and the school and must not for a moment overshadow the primary purpose—that of the best interests of those for whom it is working.